

SILVERA'S PRIORITIES

ADVOCACY POSITIONS



Priority: Workforce Stability

About Silvera for Seniors

Ensuring seniors in our community have a safe and affordable place to call home with the services and supports to meet their lifestyle needs and requirements matters to our Board of Directors, executives, partners, donors, employees, volunteers, residents, their families and the 700 seniors on our waiting list for affordable housing. Silvera is a trusted leader and a strong advocate for affordable (discounted) and well-priced market housing on behalf of seniors.

Silvera is a solutions-oriented community leader and a champion of seniors living in Calgary. We provide a diverse selection of housing with services and supports for independent older adults in 27 buildings in Calgary with 1,750 residents and 400 employees.

We are proud to partner with all orders of government to deliver on our commitment, to provide policy input to all orders of government, and to tirelessly advocate for issues and solutions that allow our seniors to live their best life and age with dignity. Our collective efforts can ensure that Calgary is a great city to age for all.

Background:

- Silvera employs nearly 400 Calgarians across its housing portfolio, with a large portion employed in Silvera's eight supportive living communities throughout the city (i.e. housekeepers; cooks; community administrators; life, learning, and leisure coordinators; placement coordinators; etc.)
- Having a well-trained and stable workforce is critical in supporting the safety and quality of life of the seniors that reside in Silvera's communities, and ensuring that Silvera achieves its strategic imperative of having a high performance culture.
- Unlike many Calgary-based non-profit organizations, Silvera faces significant inflationary cost pressures with an inflation rate of 6.6% (City of Calgary Inflation Review – Dec 2022) and nominal hourly wages increasing by 4.5%.
- Calgary's living wage in 2022 was \$22.40/hour (Alberta Living Wage Network).
- Silvera is committed to making progress in assuring that all Silvera employees earn a living wage, however the lowest wage level on Silvera's wage grid currently starts at \$17.50/hour, which is \$4.90/hour lower than Calgary's living wage.
- With government funding mechanisms not keeping up with inflationary cost pressures, Silvera will be unable to close this gap, despite efforts to create efficiencies and re-allocate resources. As a result, Silvera and the supportive living sector in general will continue to see high staff turnover rates and instability in its workforce, making it challenging to effectively support seniors in our community.
- Low wages make it difficult for Silvera to compete for qualified employees and retain employees that Silvera has invested significant effort into training and growing their skills and competencies.
- In 2023, the Government of Alberta committed to a review of the province's lodge program, which provides funding for Silvera's supportive living communities through the Lodge Assistance Program (LAP).

Policy Priority:

The Government of Alberta must prioritize workforce stability in the supportive living sector by:

- Ensuring that updated LAP funding mechanisms close the living wage gap for employees working in this sector, and committing to funding that keeps pace with inflationary growth.
- Collaborating with sector participants and training organizations to create a multi-skilled Seniors Support Worker (non-medical) program that helps train and recruit individuals seeking meaningful work in supporting seniors in our community.

